

## **BLASTOMYCOSIS**

### **WHAT IS BLASTOMYCOSIS?**

Blastomycosis is a fungal infection found in some mammals.

### **SPECIES/AGES AFFECTED**

Blastomycosis primarily affects dogs and humans of any age.

### **RISK OF INFECTION / EXPOSURE**

Risk is linked to geographic area and specific behaviours. The fungus becomes infective when exposed to air (oxygen). Areas where soil has been freshly turned (ie. landscaping, building) are suspect. Dogs likely to dig in soil or swim are at higher risk. Exposure occurs with contact with infective fungal spores in soil that has recently been exposed to air.

### **METHOD OF TRANSMISSION**

Infection can occur when breathing in infective spores, spores entering cuts on skin, eyes and mouth.

### **PREVENTION / VACCINATION**

Avoidance of known risk areas is the primary means of prevention, however, blastomycosis has been diagnosed out of these areas, therefore no preventative measures are fail safe. Vaccination is not available.

### **TRANSMISSIBLE TO PEOPLE**

Humans are susceptible to blastomycosis, but do **NOT** acquire infection from dogs. Humans become infected in the same manner as dogs - for example swimming and gardening.

### **CLINICAL SIGNS**

A wide variety of symptoms are possible. Most common are a chronic non-productive cough, chronic fever, weeping sores on body that don't resolve with time, general malaise (not eating, lethargic), limping and eye irritation.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF ILLNESS**

Without treatment, almost all infected dogs will die.

### **DIAGNOSIS**

A variety of tests are available depending on the clinical signs the dog has. The tests include swabbing sores to looking for fungal cells, checking respiratory secretions for fungal cells (transtracheal or bronchoalveolar lavages), blood and urine testing and x-rays.

### **TREATMENT**

Treatment involves antifungal medications, usually from 8 weeks to several months depending on severity of illness. Supportive care may also be required. Occasionally surgical removal of infected tissue is required.

